

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 09899 221939Z  
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 L-03 IO-14 /038 W  
-----080627 230332Z /66

R 221933Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6679

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 09899

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, UNCTAD, BE

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO REEVALUATION OF USG PARTICIPATION  
IN THE FIFTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY  
GROUP INTERNATIONAL MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 5048; (B) STATE 62866; (C) STATE 24300

1. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ANSWERED OUR MARCH REQUEST FOR BELGIAN VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT VIA DIPLOMATIC NOTE DELIVERED TO EMBASSY MAY 19. INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF NOTE FOLLOWS (COMPLIMENTARY OPENING AND CLOSING PARAGRAPHS OMITTED):

2. BEGIN TEXT. ...THE PROBLEMS OF DIVERGENT VIEWS RAISED BY THE EMBASSY (IN AN INFORMAL PAPER ON MARCH 14) ARE NOT NEW, PARTICULARLY INsofar AS THEY CONCERN THE NATURE OF THE CONVENTION FOR WHICH THE (PREPARATORY) GROUP HAS BEEN ASKED TO DRAW UP A FIRST DRAFT. IT IS CERTAIN THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE UNITED STATES FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PREPARATORY GROUP WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE ON THE SCOPE OF THE DRAFT WHICH WOULD EMERGE.

IF, ON THE ONE HAND, THE WORK OF THE PREPARATORY GROUP SHOULD CONTINUE, IT IS QUITE CERTAIN THAT THE PARTICIPATION OF THE UNITED STATES COULD HAVE A CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE ON THE CONTENT OF THE DRAFT WHICH EMERGES.

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THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WILL PURSUE IN THIS CASE ITS EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT THE OPTIONAL NATURE OF THE CONVENTION BEING PREPARED PREVAILS, AND THAT IT ESSENTIALLY CONTAINS PROPOSITIONS OF PRIVATE LAW WITH A VIEW TO FACILITATING INTERNATIONAL MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT.

ON THE OTHER HAND, GIVEN THE EXISTENCE, OVER SEVERAL

YEARS, OF UNIFORM REGULATIONS ESTABLISHED AND LARGELY USED BY CONCERNED PROFESSIONAL GROUPS, SUCH A CONVENTION -- EVEN THOUGH DESIRABLE -- IS NOT INDISPENSABLE. THE ABSENCE OF A CONVENTION WOULD APPEAR TO BE PREFERABLE TO THE ADOPTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL ACT CONTAINING PROPOSITIONS OF PUBLIC LAW LIKELY TO HINDER INTERNATIONAL MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT, AND BY THIS FACT, THE ACTIVITY OF BELGIAN FIRMS.

NEVERTHELESS, BEFORE TAKING A DECISION CONCERNING AN EVENTUAL BELGIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PREPARATORY GROUP, THE COMPETENT BELGIAN AUTHORITIES BELIEVE IT NECESSARY TO COORDINATE THEIR ACTION WITH THE OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. THIS COORDINATION MAY TAKE PLACE IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE. END TEXT. DE TARR

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## Message Attributes

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INTERNATIONAL MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT  
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Sheryl P. Walter  
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